Outlook one

My Choice My Community

Project Evaluation Report & Information Resource

February 2010

Inspiring Fully Inclusive Communities

Contents

Acknowledgements

Outlook acknowledges the contributions and goodwill that have enabled the successful transition from centre-based to community-based activities for people with disabilities, and the compilation of this Changing Days Project Report, which is a testament to all involved. Your input will be utilised to inform improvements to future service model configuration.

Specifically, Outlook would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge:

> Department of Human Services - Changing Days Initiative funding

> Outlook One Changing Day's clients and carers

> Outlook One Support Workers (past & present)

> Neighbourhood houses, community centres and other community venues in Emerald, Berwick, Narre Warren, Pakenham, Cranbourne and Hallam.

> Retailers and residents of the above communities.

Please accept this statement as a demonstration of our appreciation.

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Executive Summary

The *My Choice My Community* 12 month project was funded by the Department of Human Service's *Changing Days* Initiative, and commenced in January 2009. The purpose was twofold; firstly, to link clients within smaller urban fringe communities to local activities and opportunities, and develop support plans that broaden their community involvement, choices and access. Secondly, the program provided the opportunity to determine the access barriers within these communities and how the changing role of the Support Worker from 'carer' to 'networker' is crucial to success.

The findings of this project have been documented to highlight the impacts of moving from centre-based to community-based activities – implications for clients and their carers, and the changing role of Support Worker's in the community. The findings clearly indicate organisational progress, enhanced service delivery and improved client outcomes. Outlook has decidedly taken a leadership role in restructuring its Day Service model ahead of most in the sector, and as such, is well positioned to utilise these learnings to build capacity among other Day Service providers that are planning for, or undergoing the transition from a centre-based to community-based service model.

Section 1 of this Report outlines the project background, outcomes and recommendations. Section 2 highlights the changing role of Support Workers, underlying principles, transition tips and resources for further information.

Summary Recommendations:

Rec 1:   Develop Practice Guidelines for Support Workers that reflect the shift towards a community-based model, underpinning principles, compliance requirements and detailed methods of practice.

Rec 2:   Consider integrating a regular team meeting that focuses solely on mapping/updating community activities across each Outlook One locality (community and centre-based).

Rec 3:   Include capacity for groups to be structured based on age and needs in addition to geography.

Rec 4:   Examine options for reconfiguring the funding model to accommodate the increased cost of community inclusion.

Rec 5:   Develop a systematic approach for workers to access management and peer support for maintaining wellbeing and enhancing retention.

Rec 6:   Support Workers to take a leadership role in educating the community of the capacity of people with disabilities – a strengths-based approach.

Rec 7:   Utilise the learnings from the Berwick and Emerald Changing Days projects to inform future community-based service planning.

Part 1: Evaluation Report

Changing Days Project 'My Choice My Community'

Changing Days Background

Government Policy Directions

The *Disability Act 2006* (The Act) became operational on 1st July 2007. The Act provides the framework for a joined-up government and community approach to enable people with a disability to actively participate in the community. The Act is underpinned by principles of human rights, self-determination and citizenship and is significantly reforming the disability sector. A rights-based approach is also informed by the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

The Act supports quality by legislating disability services' standards, performance measures and compliance through independent assessment and monitoring (*Disability Act 2006 Policy and Information Manual*, July 2009). The introduction of the Quality Framework (QF) and roll out of external assessment for compliance against the QF Standards, is expected to improve the quality of disability support services and enhance accountability to people with disabilities. The QF emphasises the importance of outcomes measurement and continuous quality improvement.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has developed several policy documents that outline the procedures to be followed by disability service providers in order to comply with The Act. These requirements also form part of the Funding and Service Agreement.

Relevant guiding documents include:

❖ Interim Guidelines for Day Supports December 2010 (draft only)

❖ Day Services Policy June 2008

❖ Support Your Way: A Self Directed Approach for Victorians with a Disability

❖ Individual Support Package Guidelines July 2009

❖ Individual Support Package Handbook December 2008

❖ Victorian State Disability Plan 2002 – 2012

❖ Standards for Disability Services in Victoria (industry and outcomes)

❖ Planning policy

❖ Access policy and Implementation Guide

❖ Legislation implementation guide for restrictive interventions

❖ Legislation implementation guide for supervised treatment orders

❖ Legislation implementation guide for residential treatment facilities

❖ Better services, better outcomes, stronger communities – the quality framework for disability services in Victoria

❖ Registration of disability service providers

❖ Strengthening rights in residential services policy

❖ Department of Human Services Cultural diversity guide

❖ Department of Human Services Language services policy

❖ Disability Services cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) strategy

❖ Guidelines for setting and collection of residential charges: community service organisations

❖ Residential charges policy: department-managed residential services

❖ Rights and accountability: management of money policy.

The Changing Days Initiative: Important Changes to Day Services

The intention of the *Changing Days* initiative has been to guide service providers to redevelop their infrastructure and service models to align with the vision of the Victorian State Disability Plan 2002 – 2012 (State Plan). In essence, this has required the creation of new and more inclusive opportunities for people with a disability accessing Disability Day Services – to enhance their independence, skills, community participation and general quality of life. For Outlook this has seen a shift from centre-based to community-based activities.

Day Services have traditionally facilitated centre-based group programs focussed on education, training, recreation and pre-employment training. The *Changing Days* Initiative is underpinned by principles of inclusion, empowerment and participation, and is part of a suite of initiatives to:

❖ Inform and support people with disabilities and their carers to actively participate in decisions regarding use of their day supports

❖ Provide real choice, flexibility and viable pathways to employment and social participation

❖ Individualise support

❖ Enhance active participation with other community members in community activities

❖ Build community capacity, relationships and networks.

Of particular importance, has been the transitional phasing of service models from centre-based to community-based participation. This has required sustained engagement and open communication with people with disabilities and their carers, and the establishment of partnerships, pathways and goodwill with other providers, networks and local communities.

It is recognised that DHS is committed to reviewing and monitoring relevant policies and day service performance across the sector to ensure compliance with The Act in transitioning from traditional to more contemporary methods of engagement. Consulting with participants of the day services sector, parents and carers, disability service providers, peak bodies and other stakeholders will be crucial during the review process, in order to gauge the full gamut of perceptions and impacts.

Outlook's Changing Days Project, titled My Choice My Community, recognised from its initial program planning phase, that gaining trust of clients and carers and establishing community relationships and support, would be crucial to its success. And whilst Outlook is pleased to confirm that it has indeed been a successful transition (service model and mindset change) it has not been without challenges.

We trust that DHS and other stakeholders will take on board the learnings from this Report as a basis for a more collaborative approach to model refinement and improved client outcomes.

From 'Community Access Options' to 'Outlook One'

The launch of the State Plan in 2002 saw a focus on promoting community inclusion and full equal rights as citizens, for people with a disability. By 2004, Outlook had established the Community Access Options Service to reflect the organisation's directions of inclusion and individualised approaches in line with the State Plan. In 2006, Outlook commenced a process of reviewing its mission and vision, and as part of this review process, the Day Service was restructured and amalgamated to align more closely with Community Access Options. The result was a new service titled 'Outlook One' comprising a service model that reflects the principles and requirements of The Act and the Quality Framework.

Outlook One is part of a suite of support services that are administered through the Community Services Division, including the Respite & Leisure Service; Volunteer Service; Outlook Employment; Supported Employment and the Community Centre. A key objective of Outlook One has been to move away from isolated centre-based service delivery to small community-based satellite bases located within clients' residential communities, including Cranbourne, Narre Warren, Hallam, Berwick, Emerald and Pakenham. By mid 2009, 60% of Outlook One clients were accessing community facilities directly from these communities.

A Related Initiative – Breaking the Mould

Outlook was successful in receiving an Enhancing Sector Capacity grant in 2009 to fund a project titled *Breaking the Mould* which involves consultation with, and provision of information to clients and carers on self directed funding – what it means and how to access it; development of alternative and sustainable delivery modes that cater particularly for high complex needs; and comprehensive professional development of Support Workers on the ways in which current service provision can be enhanced to cater for individualised needs, within the context of the Quality Framework and the self-directed funding model.

This project is still underway, but is already demonstrating parity with the Changing Days recommendations outlined herein. Both projects have to date, affirmed Outlook's preliminary perspectives on the need for trialling and further refinement of Outlook One's structure, culture, service delivery approaches, budgeting and staffing capacity.

The findings of Breaking the Mould are due for release in the latter part of 2010; and alongside the learnings of Changing Days, will provide robust documented evidence of the change process, the challenges encountered, and the outcomes that have progressed achievement towards the vision of the State Plan.

Overview of Outlook's 'My Choice My Community'

Evaluation Framework

This evaluative section of the report utilises a summative approach with a focus on impacts and learnings in order to determine My Choice My Community's:

- ❖ relative success in meeting its stated objectives
- ❖ stakeholder perceptions
- ❖ outcomes and benefits
- ❖ challenges
- ❖ recommendations for the establishment of future community-based groups.

The following summary of the project's purpose, objectives, methodology and rationale preface the discussion of findings and outcomes to provide context.

My Choice My Community - Purpose

The *My Choice My Community* project intended to build on Outlook's achievements to date in creating community options for clients, especially those living in small communities on the metropolitan fringe. Local access to learning, employment and recreational options in line with the intent of the State Plan, can be fraught with difficulty in more isolated communities. Lack of local choice reduces opportunities to develop relationships and friendships with people with common interests, and these informal networks are often essential to support the person with a disability in accessing after hours activities. This was a key area of focus for the project.

My Choice My Community targeted the communities of Berwick and Emerald, and involved mapping community options, building networks, creating opportunities, and establishing access pathways for people

with disabilities living in those communities. This was undertaken (as much as possible within limited infrastructure), in accordance with the client's Individual Support Plan (ISP).

The other area of focus for the project was to monitor the changing role of Support Workers, and determine the challenges of those in isolated communities compared with larger, self-sustainable suburbs. With the government policy shift from centre-based Day Services to community-based activities, identifying the experiences, challenges and skill requirements of this changing workforce, is crucial to ensuring a supported transition and sustaining retention of quality workers in the disability field.

Objectives

The objectives of the *My Choice My Community* project were as follows.

1. Link clients residing within the smaller communities of Beaconsfield (this target location was changed to Berwick) and Emerald into activities and opportunities located directly in their own community. Support people that are often further disadvantaged by distance to services, availability of public transport etc.

2. Establish the processes necessary to develop support plans that are holistic, and incorporate other relevant service providers and informal supports that will allow clients to participate in activities in line with their goals and objectives within their own local communities and beyond the traditional day service hours of 9-3pm.

3. Empower clients and carers to shape the support required for them to meet their goals and aspirations and look at alternative support arrangements than those currently experienced.

4. Build partnerships with the relevant community organisations to establish viable bases and meeting points for clients to commence each morning as required, increase choice and options of activities and create connections/relationships within their community.

5. Assist clients and informal supports to access and integrate into local community activities.

6. Develop a system of ensuring that outcomes against client goals and aspirations can be tracked and monitored when informal supports are utilised.

7. Evaluate the techniques used by Support Workers developing the necessary partnerships in these smaller communities with those used by Support Workers creating opportunities in larger communities.

8. Develop procedures/training material for Support Workers to assist and support them with their changing job role.

Details of the challenges and outcomes against the objectives are discussed further in this report.

Project Methodology

The project targeted 11 clients within the communities of Emerald and Berwick, with a mix living at home with a parent or within supported accommodation. The two new community projects were established and local clients and their carers were contacted and offered the opportunity to participate. Each community group commenced one day per week to gradually transition clients from their current day support activities. This was progressively increased in line with individual needs.

Discussions with clients and carers occurred at commencement to identify needs and determine methods for building informal networks to enable community participation after hours. A volunteer supporter per project location was accessed from Outlook's volunteer pool.

Clients' Individual Support Plans were reviewed with all relevant parties, including parents/carers and accommodation supervisors, and amended to include mainstream local activities in line with aspirations. The emphasis was on maximising choice. Support Workers were required to establish a community base or viable meeting point for activities, and build informal supports to sustain access to community options. They also liaised with community services and groups to enhance a positive integration of clients into mainstream activities.

Project progress and outcomes were to be considered in the context of comparison with other established community-based groups in larger communities.

A resource manual including procedural framework, key attributes and duties of the community-based Support Worker role, recommendations for professional development, and contact details for further information was to be developed based on the findings of the project – to inform transition from the traditional carer role to that of community networker.

A Steering Committee was to be formed comprising project staff and consumers, but this never eventuated. It appears that participation on the Committee may have been hindered by ageing carers' reluctance or reduced capacity for public access. Consultation was instead undertaken with all stakeholders via regular phone contact.

Project Rationale

Outlook had in many ways pre-empted a government policy shift for Day Services, in line with the State Plan and The Act, towards a more inclusive, mainstream community participation model. Two years of extensive planning and community consultations led to the 2006 restructure, rebranding and launch of a new vision – to move from a disability-centric organisation to that of an inclusive community facility. This set the foundation for a new strategic direction for Outlook, which has seen greater integration with, and inclusiveness by mainstream society.

Philosophically and strategically, moving the emphasis for Outlook's Day Services from centre-based to community-based, has proven to be both positive and challenging. Historically, Day Services have tended to operate out of, and link clients into larger communities, based on the location of the Day Service, transport links and supporting infrastructure. Clients living in smaller communities have had to travel to Day Services and other community activities outside their own community. This has hindered the development of social networks with local people and their connection to local services.

The capacity of community connectedness to improve health and wellbeing and reduce isolation cannot be underestimated. Social scientists assert that a sense of community comes from commonalities of lifestyle among community members, a shared sense of social cohesion and a collective conscience. This appears particularly evident within rural and isolated communities. Emerald, one of the project locations, is located in the hills in the Shire of Cardinia, and has limited public facilities and infrastructure. Anecdotally it is a tight-knit community, but lacks support networks for disadvantaged groups. The selection of Emerald as a comparative location against its suburban counterparts, has been useful in highlighting the impacts of implementing the Changing Days model across diverse community settings.

Project Achievements & Outcomes

Achievement against Objectives

Objective 1: Linking clients to their local community

My Choice My Community largely achieved its stated objectives. The main variation was substituting Beaconsfield with Berwick as a target community. This was due to a significant lack of community-based opportunities in Beaconsfield (with locals relying on neighbouring facilities, especially Berwick), a lack of transport options, and because the greatest learning was to come from comparing a small, isolated community with a more self sufficient locale.

The Berwick group attends the Brentwood Community Centre, (located in a housing estate on the outer fringes of Berwick) and accesses local shops, public transport and Outlook transport to attend activities such as, Sailability and an outdoor education group. In an effort to create a sense of inclusion and belonging in the new venue the group worked with the Community Centre to create a community garden, with successful outcomes for all involved.

The Berwick Support Worker indicated that the Group is much more active in their local community in line with the purpose of the Changing Days initiative and objective 1 of *My Choice My Community*. However, it is also consistently apparent from interviews with Outlook's Support Workers, that there are aspects of the service model that require improvement. These are discussed further in this Report.

The Emerald Group developed a strong working relationship with the Emerald Community House (ECH). Clients attended a community bus trip organised through ECH with other members of the local community – an opportunity to build relationships with Emerald residents. All Group members became members of the ECH and can readily access on-site computers free of charge. A relationship was also established with the St. Mark's Church Opportunity Shop. One of the Group members commenced volunteering once per week, providing an opportunity to meet locals, build networks and enhance skills. Another member of the Group would phone in to Emerald Radio Station 3MDR and speak on air about the Emerald Group's news and events. Informal relationships were also established with Emerald Bakery, Café and Library where staff were very supportive and helpful.

Objective 2: Individual Support Plans

Each client's ISP was revised to reflect local community involvement objectives. There is no doubt that strong localised relationships were forged for both locales and there has been greater capacity and flexibility for engaging in activities beyond traditional Day Service hours. As an example, a Group member was linked into the Council's Youth Bus program (operating from 3.30 – 5pm) with the purpose of connecting young people in their local community through the provision of free activities.

Clearly, in a small community such as Emerald, choices are significantly limited. Yet this has been secondary to the greater import of changing mindsets – people with disabilities, carers and Support Workers alike. Switching from a structured, protective and predictable program to a less formal, flexible and normalised approach to daily activities, appears to have been one of the greatest challenges and successes.

Objective 3: Empowerment

All Outlook Support Workers are cognisant of ensuring that client planning processes are person-centred, client-driven, strengths-based and empowering. This practice is well embedded in the culture of Outlook. There is little argument that clients have access to greater choice in the community – accessing public

transport, choosing activities and spending their money. However, community access comes at a cost, and the cost of inclusion is prohibitive for many clients.

Objective 4: Community connections

Local Community Centres and Libraries have been instrumental in providing a community venue base for clients to meet and commence their day, if required. An identified venue enables the Support Worker and participants to also identify alternative options in extreme weather conditions. Creating community connections is crucial to increasing options for people to come together – this is evident across both project sites and more broadly across Outlook.

Objective 5: Access and integration

There is clear evidence that both Groups were integrated into mainstream activities, and it seems that the Group's regular presence in their community proved to break down barriers. There were however, physical access issues for one client of the Emerald Group who is in a wheelchair and another with mobility issues. Community access was restricted due to topography, lack of ramps into public buildings, lack of accessible toilets and disabled parking.

There were also access limitations in regard to community options for both Groups. Whilst there is arguably more to see and do in Berwick than Emerald, both communities lacked variety when compared with their larger counterparts. Preparing the participants for an activity and then finding the facility closed or activity cancelled, was problematic for some clients who (at the least) were disappointed or (in the extreme) became distressed. This is however, indicative of life, particularly in smaller communities with limited infrastructure. Other community members travel to larger neighbouring areas to fulfil a need that their own community cannot. This is essentially a normalised experience, and both groups did this, with some members developing skills and confidence to independently access public transport.

Objective 6: Tracking outcomes

Achievement of outcomes against client goals in regard to use of informal supports, is tracked by the Support Worker and documented in the client's case notes. This enables the Worker to monitor the relationship and actively seek additional opportunities to enhance local participation, including after hours. A good example for this objective is linking of an Emerald Group member with a local volunteer group, and her subsequent commitment to regular volunteering, which in turn increased her skills and localised social networks.

Objective 7: Community comparisons and learnings

The production of this Report meets this objective in that it describes and compares the experiences of both the *My Choice My Community* Groups and the broader Outlook One Groups. It appears that the techniques adopted by Support Workers to develop community connections is less dependent on the size or location of the community, and more related to the attributes, communication style and capacity of individual workers. The methods of community engagement were relatively consistent across all locations, although in some areas relationships were already established through other means, providing leverage (eg. U3A links in Pakenham). However in the new sites, Workers were required to initiate relationships, and in the small township of Emerald, this was particularly challenging at the outset.

The capacity of individual workers to engage with retailers, transport workers, community services workers and others in public, appears to be paramount to the successful implementation of the Changing Days community-based service model. Development of relationships based on demonstrable trust, rapport and reciprocal goodwill were reported as enhancing sustainability of linkages with the community.

Objective 8: Transition of Support Worker role

This Report addresses objective 8 through provision of information and recommendations for the development of future community-based service models, and the transition in mindset and skills for community-based Support Workers.

Benefits and Opportunities

The clients of both the Emerald and Berwick Groups demonstrated positive changes in attitudes, behaviour, confidence and skills, including:

- ❖ Increased independence – spending money, buying bus tickets, travel on public transport
- ❖ Increased social skills
- ❖ Less distance to travel to participate in the community
- ❖ Reduced challenging behaviours (less people and noise to trigger a sensory overload response)
- ❖ Enhanced familiarity of local community
- ❖ Sense of belonging to the Group
- ❖ Informal sense of 'hanging out' together
- ❖ Adaptability to changing plans
- ❖ Recognition of individual capabilities within small group setting
- ❖ Responsiveness to a more natural and relaxed environment
- ❖ New life experiences (eg. one client became a member of the local gym and attends weekly for a personal training session)
- ❖ Development of local social networks (being recognised in street and acknowledged by name)
- ❖ Ability to travel independently and link with groups in other locations (choice and flexibility)
- ❖ Seeing familiar faces in the community (family, friends and in one case, an old teacher who linked the client into a program in a neighbouring community with people her own age)
- ❖ A sense of community pride and belonging
- ❖ Increased confidence in relating with members of the community
- ❖ Enhanced community access for people in a wheelchair.

In addition to the positive outcomes listed above for Emerald and Berwick Groups, the following is a summary of outcomes and key learnings as a result of transition across all Outlook One Groups.

Support Workers' Experiences of their Changing Role

Outlook's Support Workers facilitate community-based activities with people with disabilities across the suburbs of Narre Warren, Berwick, Cranbourne, Hallam, Pakenham and Emerald. Group members comprise a mix of living circumstances – just over half reside at home with a parent and the remainder are residents of community residential units.

Support Workers were interviewed to seek responses to the following 9 questions, to gauge perceptions on the impacts of the shift from centre-based to community-based activities, and to determine if there were differences between outer metropolitan and isolated communities. The following is a summary of findings which will inform improvements in systems, building community capacity and practice.

1. What is your past experience – centre or community based?

   Table 1: Comparison of Support Workers' Past Work Experience
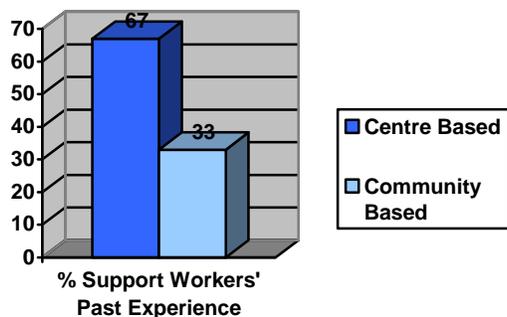
   > *"Wouldn't want to come back to the Centre again – Support Workers and clients love the community involvement, learning and rights"*
   > Support Worker

   Given that the majority of Support Workers at Outlook have a centre-based background, the transition in mindset and practices to a community-based approach, is to be commended. The process has clearly been challenging at times, and as highlighted in this report, there are opportunities to further enhance the service model.

2. What do you do and how does this differ from your past role? (past role versus new policy directions)

   Group sizes are much smaller since moving to a community-based model. Some Support Workers indicated that there was greater opportunity for clients to exercise their independence in accordance with the goals in their ISP, and yet others felt that it was problematic trying to address individual needs in a group setting, as the group had to all do an activity that was within every member's price range, capacity and choice. Some Workers have linked clients with other Outlook One Groups to broaden their experiences of neighbouring communities.

   The advantage in centre-based programs was that individual needs were easier to coordinate. The Support Worker could link clients into their activity of choice; this meant that the composition of the groups and Workers constantly changed – a positive for some in regard to experiencing a variety of worker approaches and meeting new people, a disadvantage for clients who struggled with change, having built rapport with a particular worker and established friendship networks.

   The role of Support Worker has changed from "doing" to "stepping back" and allowing participants to do for themselves. The centre-based model was more 'hands on', and there was little input sought from Support Workers into the program curriculum. Conversely, Support Workers now determine the activities based on the needs of members of their Group. Additionally, being based in the community has increased opportunities to develop competency in accessing public transport, with some clients having achieved travel independence. Some Workers indicated that they had seen a greater level of client input into their ISPs in line with Outlook's person-centred and needs-based philosophy.

Community-based Support Worker's focus more on:

⇒ Linking clients into activities within their local communities

⇒ Creating opportunities for skill development

⇒ Initiating the development of relationships between clients and the community

⇒ Raising awareness of access issues for people with a disability and the principles of inclusion.

3. What are the values / attributes required for the job? Has this changed over the years?

Support Workers indicated that both the underlying values and attributes for the role had changed in line with the service model. Centre-based work tended to be more structured, predictable and hands-on (carer model), whereas the community-based worker is required to be flexible, adaptable to changing needs and a coordinator rather than a 'doer'.

Support Workers identified the following key values and attributes in order to be an effective community-based worker:

⇒ Community development / facilitation role

⇒ Innovative, resourceful and flexible (able to improvise at short notice if activity is cancelled)

⇒ Empowering value base (inclusive, rights-based, person-centred approach)

⇒ Reliable, contactable and available

⇒ Organised

⇒ Good communicator and listener

⇒ Ability to respond to unexpected events, common sense

⇒ Work independently (capable)

⇒ Relaxed approach rather than authoritarian

⇒ Previous work experience

⇒ Active, and enjoy the outdoors

⇒ Understanding of parents

⇒ Awareness of a broad range of disabilities (especially triggers for behavioural issues)

⇒ Respectful and aware of noise levels, behaviour and privacy

⇒ Empathic (what would you want?)

⇒ Ability to undertake a needs assessment and follow through with implementation

⇒ Focus on developing independent living skills.

4. What do you observe as the community's perceptions of your changing role – clients, parents, carers and community perceptions?

Parents' perceptions as observed by the Support Workers:

⇒ Some reluctance in embracing the community-based independent approach (safety is a priority)

⇒ Fear of change

⇒ Trust of Support Worker is crucial to success of transition, and this has increased over time

⇒ Smaller groups allow a more personalised approach

⇒ Less likely to perceive Workers as 'carers' now, but this change in mindset is still a work in progress

⇒ Value continuity of same Support Worker

⇒ ISP planning meetings are holistic and inclusive of carers.

"All of the clients that I worked with loved being in their local area and connecting with the community. They really appreciated the sense of independence.
They became more confident each day".
Support Worker

Clients' perceptions as observed by the Support Workers:

⇒ More empowered

⇒ Consistency of same worker - key to adapting to changed model

⇒ Development of social networks with mainstream community – true inclusion

⇒ Some friendships have been hindered by accessing different communities

⇒ Developed good relationship with bus and taxi drivers

⇒ Five days per week out in the community can be tiring

⇒ Need the option of alternative activities (centre/home-based) during extreme weather conditions

⇒ Starting the day in the community instead of meeting at the Centre reduces downtime.

"I like the community radio and learning new things like computer"
Client

"[He] is more independent, and helps with the other clients – it makes him feel important"
Parent

Community perceptions as observed by the Support Workers:

⇒ Mixed reactions in public initially, but now generally positive and inclusive – notable change in attitudes within last 18 months

⇒ Retailers, transport operators, public venues and community service workers are very welcoming

⇒ Communication is becoming more personalised as community members get to know individual clients.

"We had lovely support from the community that we participated in. At first some members of the community had trouble communicating with the clients and were unsure about a staff member sitting back and letting the clients be independent. A few people would think that we were not doing our job properly by not acting as the carer and helping them every step of the way. This however changed when they started to see the progress that the group was making".
Support Worker

5. If you were to develop a PD for Support Workers given the change in focus, what would you suggest needs to be included?

The response by Support Workers to this question was very comprehensive. It encapsulated practice-based evidence and key learnings from the transition experience, policy directions, organisational values, and local knowledge. It is Outlook's intention to update the current Support Worker Position Description to more accurately reflect the values, attributes and requirements suggested by workers in accordance with The Act, the State Plan and DHS Day Services policy.

Community-Based Support Worker requirements:

⇒ Networking and community development/strengthening skills

⇒ Good communication, time management and organisational skills

⇒ Cert IV Disability Services

⇒ Understand the State Plan and the history of institutionalised care in Victoria

⇒ Focus on regular review of needs and achievement of community goals

⇒ Problem solver (capacity to deal with crises)

⇒ Resourcefulness

⇒ Experience in the field

⇒ Relationship building

⇒ Empathy

⇒ Enthusiasm

⇒ Trustworthiness and rapport building skills

⇒ Individualised approach (attention and adaptability to all group member's needs and abilities)

⇒ Demonstrated initiative

⇒ Knowledge of OH&S and how to mitigate/manage risk in new environments.

6. Do you have a clear framework for practice – vision, directions, practice guidelines? Explain.

    Support Workers certainly appeared confident in their knowledge of the requirements of their role, despite a lack of documented practice guidelines for this community model. Workers indicated that there are a range of other sources of information and induction support, that (when combined) define their roles and responsibilities. These include:

    ❖ Code of Conduct

    ❖ Position Description

    ❖ Contract

    ❖ Policies

    ❖ Supporting documentation on Outlook's Intranet

    ❖ Mentoring of new Support Workers

    ❖ Placements for trainees

    ❖ Team support

    ❖ Daily program details centrally stored for ease of access (if a staff member is away, the replacement can readily coordinate the program)

    ❖ Knowledge of the Disability Act.

7. How important is the role of relationship building with the community?

    The role of relationship building was perceived by Support Workers as crucial in establishing networks between community members and clients in order to feel more accepted by, and included in their local community. Respect and goodwill were seen as underpinning the successfulness of these relationships, especially in establishing sustainable support networks for clients.

    > *"Without relationship building you would feel very isolated in your role. The community provides support for the staff member and the clients. Members of the community would offer assistance and create a feeling of belonging for the clients. It is also a way of increasing the opportunities that are available".* Support Worker

8. How are you empowered to address issues of under performance by casuals and volunteers?

    Most of the Support Workers indicated that they felt they had a duty of care to address issues of underperformance or breaches of conduct. They would address the person in question directly as a first option, and then discuss the matter with the Manager if the issue continued. Where there is a clash between personalities of casual staff and clients, the Support Worker would request the allocator not place the person with the group again.

    It is worth noting that the importance of retaining casual staff and volunteers was raised as a factor of potential reluctance to pursue underperformance. It was suggested that developing a 360 degree performance review process could be useful in assessing and regularly reviewing the worker/volunteer from the perspectives of peers, supervisors, a self assessment, clients and their carers, and other relevant stakeholders. This system would highlight training and development requirements.

    Educating casuals and volunteers during induction of the organisational culture, legislative requirements, roles and responsibilities was seen as a critical mitigation strategy.

> *"[His] independence and skills have improved over the past 12 months and he is involved in public speaking"* Parent

9. What do you do if there is a lack of choice of community activities or facilities? Do you map local options as part of planning community activities?

Extremes in weather conditions was a consistent issue among Support Workers – inclement weather and extreme heat are equally uncomfortable and can hinder planned activities. This further highlights the importance of establishing a base in the community – a sheltered gathering place where alternative options can be planned.

Under the centre-based model, all activities were centrally listed and the Support Worker would allocate clients to groups according to the goals in their ISPs. This appears to have been an effective, coordinated system that enabled an individualised approach. Conversely, there does not appear to be a formalised process under the community-based model; and whilst this approach has improved participation, a sense of belonging, social networks, skills and independence, there appears to be less choice of structured activities. It was highlighted that in order for a centralised approach to program planning to be appropriate and effective, this should be negotiated in collaboration with the Support Workers so the breadth of activities broadly reflects ISP goals.

Support Workers develop their program of activities based on local options, the details of which are sourced via mailing lists, community booklets, council brochures, community centre programs, library programs and networks. The Workers appear confident in their resourcefulness and community connections, which enable them to improvise when a community activity is cancelled.

> *"In one year, [client] has travel trained, developed life skills and become more independent; has had more avenues and been challenged through diverse experiences"*
> Support Worker

My Community… My Choice?

Challenges – Changing Days Project (Emerald and Berwick)

Infrastructure and costs

The role of the Support Worker across the board has changed, and is varied – from facilitator, enabler and advocate to networker and community development worker. As indicated thus far, they must be organised, resourceful, trustworthy and able to improvise. The latter was a challenge for both the Emerald and the Berwick groups.

Whilst Berwick township is larger than Emerald, more centralised and has greater infrastructure, it was a challenge focussing on individual needs when logistically (due to staff ratios) the group functioned as a unit. Activities were often determined based on ability of members and affordability. In fact, the cost of community participation was identified by 100% of Support Workers as the greatest challenge of the community-based model. The recurring costs of activities, meals and transport are an economic barrier to full participation – a consistent issue across all groups.

Access

Access within Berwick was not identified as an issue for the Group, although this was arguably related more to the mobility of group members than the accessibility of the local topography and public venues. Conversely, the Emerald Group faced considerable access issues, with lack of wheelchair access to public spaces, facilities and buildings. The topography and condition of footpaths was not accessible by people with mobility issues.

Access was also hindered at times with venues being closed, requiring the group to identify an alternative option. Whilst this can be difficult and may cause distress to some clients, it is also a normalised experience. Things don't always go according to plan, and there is learning to be gained from improvising.

Transport access was also a significant barrier, with the Emerald bus service being infrequent and not wheelchair accessible. The lack of disabled access throughout the township of Emerald and on local transport, is a broader systemic issue that is beyond the scope of this project. However, as an advocate of the rights of people with disabilities, Outlook is committed to addressing such inequities.

Group composition

As previously indicated, groups are now determined by community of residence, which results in a variety of ages, abilities and interests. It is challenging and not always possible for the Support Worker to plan activities that are accessible, affordable, of interest and meet individual needs. Whilst there are some benefits in cross-generational interaction, peer groups and friendships are an important part of social development, and the reality is that some client friendships were impacted by the shift from centre-based to community-based activities.

One of the greatest risks for the community-based Support Worker is maintaining the safety of self, the group, and the community if there is an incident involving a participant. As a sole worker, it is a significant challenge to deal with the incident, whilst concurrently calming others, ensuring the safety of all involved and enlisting assistance (eg. emergency services). The probability of this risk is considerable given the diversity of clients, behavioural factors and the staff to client ratio.

Whilst the sample of parent carers interviewed, acknowledged that group composition was problematic in terms of incompatibility of ability, ages and interests, they also recognised this as a 'trade off' for a geographic-based group composition – a model that enables their son/daughter to develop a sense of connectedness with their home community, increase local networks and (for some clients) enhance their confidence in navigating the community independently.

Within a centre-based model, there is a tendency for group members to select activities they have engaged in before, because it is familiar and therefore non-threatening. Conversely, through experiencing a range of options available in their home community through the community-based model, some clients have questioned what else is available to them in other communities, and sought new experiences.

Challenges – Other 'Outlook One' Community-based Groups

Cost

Cost of activities and transport were consistently reported by 100% of Support Workers and parents as being prohibitive. Financial disadvantage is a key factor in determining community activities. There is a considerable cost involved in navigating through local communities, undertaking structured activities in the public domain, and participating in social pleasures (eg. eating out, shopping).

The funding model does not adequately meet the costs of community inclusion. The staffing ratio negates the capacity for accompanied individualised activities, and given that most clients/carers are on pensions, the reality is that full and varied community participation is restricted. Philosophically, Outlook recognises the benefit in providing a mix of Day Service support and personalised support where the client is assessed as having capacity to attend an activity of their personal choosing that is outside of the funding scope of the provider. We recognise that building informal social supports is critical to the success of this approach, as there will remain a contingent of clients who will require support in order to continue to access their community safely.

The cost of administering an inclusive service model is greater than the funding allocation. It is with a sense of goodwill and commitment to meeting local needs, that Outlook bears the weekly loss. This of course, is not a viable in the longer term, yet the shortfall is not perpetuated in the absence of trialling alternative budgeting models. On the contrary, Outlook demonstrates a continuous process of service viability self assessment and budget review in order to achieve system efficiencies and cost effectiveness, with minimal impact on service capacity and quality. Indeed, Outlook is currently reviewing the structure of Outlook One and identifying opportunities for redressing this deficit.

DHS (January 2010:15) draft *Interim Guidelines for Day Support*, states the "unit pricing system includes components for salaries, allowances, workcover and superannuation; and provision for long service leave, recreation and staff sick leave, roster backfill, public holidays, annual leave loading, employment safety screening, the net cost of providing transport support and operating/administrative overhead costs. Funds for training are incorporated at 1.5% of the salary component." However, the capacity to cover salaries, oncosts and administration, is contingent on client numbers. Portable funding, may by necessity see the casualisation of the Day Services workforce, which runs the risk of destabilising the sector.

DHS acknowledges that "personalised supports can be more costly as there may be less people contributing to cover the cost. Planning undertaken with a person to develop their supports should consider the use of informal supports, a contribution to the cost from their own funds where possible and the impact of purchasing more costly supports on other areas of their life" (DHS, 2010:11). It is acknowledged that DHS (Day Services Policy, June 2008) will be arranging formal reviews of the unit cost, fee structure and portability of funding within the Day Service sector. 'Coal face' realities, as detailed in this Report, will be crucial to the accuracy of the review process outcomes.

On the go…

Clients don't always want to be busy. Sometimes they would prefer to stay home or be at the Centre where there are opportunities to relax and not feel compelled to interact with others. The comfortable, quiet spaces at the Centre are particularly valuable when clients are having a bad day and need time to themselves. For those who are having 'can't be bothered' days, it is particularly problematic if the group doesn't have a community base, and this is amplified when having to commute in extreme weather conditions.

Whilst a community-based model has undoubtedly enhanced a sense of belonging for clients to their local communities, and exposed them to different experiences, choices are by necessity often limited to the needs of the group rather than the needs of individuals.

Isolation of Workers

Support Workers are significantly more isolated from their colleagues since the shift to a community-based model. There is limited capacity to collaboratively plan, debrief or share information; and whilst workers have the opportunity to come together at Outlook Head Office, the time by necessity is generally spent writing case notes.

Other Challenges

Support Workers across all sites have expressed concerns regarding:

❖ Composition of groups – the age and ability of individuals impacts on the whole group

❖ Geography – determines the group composition instead of like-mindedness, parity of goals and peer-base; division has impacted on sustainability of friendships

❖ Lack of transport options and a reliable community base (for some groups) especially in extreme weather conditions.

Recommendations

There are two aspects to the recommendations – the first being actions to enhance community building capacity (broad approach) and the second, is program specific improvements (introspective). There have been consistent perceptions and trends emerging during the information gathering and analysis processes. Those that have been involved in Changing Days and the broader Outlook One Groups, are best equipped to advise areas for improvement, as they 'live it' every day. Thus, the following recommendations are based on feedback, compliance with legislation and policy directions.

Recommendation	Rationale	Suggested Action

1. Develop Practice Guidelines for Support Workers that reflect the shift towards a community-based model, underpinning principles, compliance requirements and detailed methods of practice.	▪ No specific documented work directions in community based model
	▪ Need a clearly articulated framework for practice in the community based model
	▪ Assumption that workers know what to do and have the necessary skills in relation community development/networking
	▪ Shift in role is challenging
	▪ Isolation of workers
		▪ Workshop content with Support Workers to provide a forum for shared learning
		▪ Develop Guidelines that include:
		  o Service model structure and context
		  o Principles (including community development)
		  o Compliance with The Act, State Plan and QF
		  o Specific community engagement strategies
		  o Strategies for addressing individual needs within the context of the group's capacity
		  o Risk assessment and incident management procedures
		  o Secondary consultation and peer support
		▪ Identify and address training needs, especially regarding the change in mindset and skills required for community work and time management (to free up time for peer support)
		▪ Utilise client observation time to write case notes, and where possible write them with the client's input, utilising the opportunity to celebrate achievements – this should free up time for peer

Recommendation	Rationale	Suggested Action
		support, debriefing and information sharing ▪ Integrate into the induction process.
2. Consider integrating a regular team meeting that focuses solely on mapping/updating community activities across each Outlook One locality.	▪ Program of activities has been prepared in isolation of broader consultation with Support Workers ▪ Evidence of clients' ISP informs planning ▪ Lack of infrastructure and access in some localities ▪ Capacity to link groups and staffing ▪ Need to provide more flexible hours of support	▪ Schedule regular program planning meetings involving all relevant managers and staff ▪ Share resources and knowledge of new, changing and ceasing community options across all locales ▪ Discuss ISP needs (de-identified or consent) and map to community options ▪ Create flexible pathways between all groups to link individual clients into activities outside of their community that reflect their ISP ▪ Advise the team of access issues experienced within particular communities to enhance awareness and ensure management are aware of issues that require further advocacy action.
3. Include capacity for groups to be structured based on age and needs in addition to geography.	▪ The Act and QF Standards require opportunities for localised social participation to connect people with their local community, but also refers to individual needs, choices and the right to direct their support options ▪ Limited choice in some client's home community due to limited public facilities, options and access ▪ Choices are often limited to the needs of the group rather than the needs of the individual ▪ Not feasible to plan activities that will be accessible, affordable and meet the needs of all group members ▪ Some client friendships have been impacted by geographic separation ▪ Some staff indicated value in groups experiencing different worker style and group composition	▪ Outlook to continue building on this model to individualise service delivery and further move away from a group model ▪ Management and Support Workers to brainstorm in consultation with clients and carers, alternative service delivery models that provide a mix of local community activities, peer based activities, and ISP based activities – to connect clients with their home community, their peer networks and enhance achievement of individual goals ▪ Staffing configuration and costings will be integral to determining viability of alternate options.
4. Examine options for reconfiguring the funding model to accommodate the increased cost of community inclusion.	▪ The prohibitive cost of community inclusion was the greatest challenge expressed by all Support Workers	▪ Map other service models and strategies for addressing community participation costs ▪ Explore brokerage options ▪ If feasible to configure an alternative service budget, seek PaSA input. ▪ Raise awareness of cost capacity with DHS in relation to adequacy of funding to achieve the individualised community inclusive approach
5. Develop a systematic approach for workers to access management and peer support for maintaining wellbeing and enhancing retention.	▪ Centre-based model provided a strong peer support base for workers ▪ Some community-based workers feel isolated from peer/management support ▪ Working in more remote communities is problematic due to	▪ Review and improve current systems designed to Support Workers in the community, including safety procedures (link with rec. 1 Practice Guidelines) ▪ Ensure a member of the management team or peer is available by phone to workers when in the community ▪ Formalise procedures for debriefing

Recommendation	Rationale	Suggested Action
	limited infrastructure	▪ Ensure workers have access to regular supervision sessions.

6. Support Workers to take a leadership role in educating the community of the capacity of people with disabilities – a strengths-based approach.	▪ Change community thinking
	▪ People with disabilities able to access their local community independently and confidently
	▪ Improve daily living skills and mobility
	▪ Facilitate a mindset change in carers
	▪ Build relationships to enhance sustainability of linkages
		▪ Conduct strengths-based training for all staff and managers to ensure philosophical consistency across the agency
		▪ Possible options include:
		  ○ Public forum
		  ○ Hosting a public event and inviting retailers, community etc.
		  ○ Information stand at shopping precincts
		  ○ Information packs
		  ○ Linking into other community events
		  ○ Invitation of local community leaders to AGM and other Outlook events
		  ○ Carer social (eg. afternoon tea) and support groups

7. Utilise the learnings from the Berwick and Emerald Changing Days projects to inform future community-based service planning.	▪ Objective of Changing Days project ▪ Mitigation of risks ▪ Pre-emptive planning (conditions for success)	▪ Map the community for options before commencing ▪ Location and resources need to be adequately established before commencing ▪ Communicate the change in service model to clients and their carers well beforehand, allowing time to adjust ▪ Introduce a transitional phasing in of the new service model (eg. starting at 1 day per week initially) ▪ All Support Workers must be contactable by mobile phone ▪ Link with recommendations 3 & 4 above re-negotiable staff/client ratios.

Part 2: Information Resource

The Changing Role of Support Workers

Day Services – The Way Forward

Changes to the Day Services Sector

The Disability Act 2006 provides the framework for a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to enable people with a disability to actively participate and feel included in the life of the community. The Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012 (State Plan) transforms this legislation into a statewide vision which recognises that communities must be supported to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. This vision is in part, being progressed across the Day Service sector through the *Changing Days* Initiative, which aims to support the development of more innovative individual support approaches that increase community access and inclusion. Hence, *Changing Day's* providers are required to:

- ❖ Provide flexible options that meet individual needs
- ❖ Promote individualised planning and support
- ❖ Promote broader, more innovative partnerships within the community sector.

Furthermore, in line with the Department of Human Service's *Day Service Policy 2007*, providers must comply with the following legislative requirements:

- ❖ Registration of Service Providers
- ❖ Implementation of the Disability Support Register
- ❖ Planning
- ❖ Restrictive Intervention
- ❖ Provision of Information, including Complaints.

Underlying Principles

The key principles underlying Day Services in line with the State Plan, are rights, dignity, choice, social justice and inclusion. Accordingly, Day Services are required to conduct their business in a manner that reflects these principles and advances the citizenship of people with disabilities.

Day Service providers are required to:

- ❖ Provide support to persons with a disability in a manner that respects their privacy and dignity
- ❖ Demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness to the individual needs and goals of a person with a disability through an individualised planning process
- ❖ Consider and respect the role of support persons who are significant in the life of the person with a disability
- ❖ Support persons with a disability to access services that enhance their choices and independence
- ❖ Encourage and facilitate persons with a disability to access services as part of their local community and foster collaboration, coordination and integration with other services
- ❖ Recognise that people with different types of disability and at different stages in their lives, may require different models of service/practice to realise their physical, social, emotional and intellectual capacities

❖ Develop and administer services and supports to ensure that persons with a disability are able to have access to advocacy, support, and enable meaningful decision making about the services they receive

❖ Demonstrate accountability for the quality of services provided and for the extent to which the rights of persons with a disability are promoted and protected in the provision of those services

❖ Provide services and supports in a way that reasonably balances safety with the rights of persons with a disability to choose to participate in activities involving a degree of risk

❖ Lead the way in developing partnerships with other community organisations and government agencies that enable people with a disability to access a wider range of activities within their local communities.

Practical Tips for Transitioning from 'Carer' to 'Networker'

The interview process conducted to inform the content of this report, indicated that one of the greatest challenges in transitioning from centre-based to community-based activity, has been changing mindsets among carers and the community – to recognise the import and value of the shift in service focus. Generally clients and workers alike have successfully made the transition, and have been instrumental in their own right in opening the minds of carers and community members. It has been a gradual process of gaining trust and promoting the abilities and rights of clients to participate in the life of 'their' community.

The transition has required Support Workers to shift their thinking and practice from one of 'carer' – doing for and on behalf of clients, to one of 'networker' - linking clients into their local community and standing back while clients 'do' for themselves.

The ultimate goal for Outlook workers is to build client, carer and community capacity and gradually withdraw support to enhance independence.

The following tips for making a successful transition are a composite of feedback from Support Workers, clients and carers; DHS Day Service Policy requirements; and duties required within the Outlook Support Worker Position Description.

Support Worker Job Profile – Key Areas	Community-based Role Requirements	Transition Tips
▪ Client Support	▪ Deliver a quality service, and promote / protect the rights of clients ▪ Achieve community-based goals – encourage local access ▪ Establish trust and open lines of communication with carers ▪ Facilitate individualised planning and support that acknowledges age, life stages and ability ▪ Tailor flexible responses to individual needs ▪ Engage in a partnership approach with clients and carers to develop the Support Plan – meaningful decision making and respect for the individual and carer role ▪ Create opportunities to achieve Support Plan goals ▪ Undertake regular assessment of client support requirement	▪ Thorough needs assessment ▪ Individualised focus ▪ Map the resources of the community within which the group/client is to be based ▪ Visit retailers and community services within the community, introduce yourself and educate them on the purpose of the new Day Service approach ▪ Seek commitment of a base / support from the community – make a personalised approach ▪ Actively promote the possibilities for people with disabilities to carers and the community ▪ Allocate time from the outset with parents to build rapport and trust, and hear / resolve their concerns ▪ Determine with colleagues, opportunities to move clients between groups to access specific activities in line with their Support Plan ▪ Enable clients to share support options with

Support Worker Job Profile – Key Areas	Community-based Role Requirements	Transition Tips
	▪ Withdraw support as independence is increased	another client of their choice and use their combined ISP funding to purchase supports ▪ Recognise that the ISP arrangement enables clients to purchase personalised supports in addition to Day Services, and as the client's worker, arrange for purchase of these supports to complement achievement of the Support Plan ▪ Identify and link with informal supports eg. family members, volunteer groups, community groups ▪ Explore with carers, opportunities for arranging social time for their adult child at one another's homes/community setting, to enhance informal social peer contact and provide reciprocal carer respite
▪ Occupational Health & Safety	▪ Understand Duty of Care requirements ▪ In providing a flexible, community-based program of activities, balance the needs of individuals and the group, against potential risks ▪ Acknowledge that participating in mitigated risk taking activities is a right of clients, but you have a duty of care to ensure all associated risks have been assessed to maximise safety ▪ Follow procedures to protect self, colleagues, clients and the broader community ▪ Ensure community venues including workplaces are assessed and deemed safe, prior to allowing a client or group of clients to participate in the activity/training/ work ▪ Ensure the recommendations of all risk assessments are adhered to and appropriate support is provided to the client ▪ Maintain safe work practices	▪ Familiarise oneself with OH&S, risk management and duty of care policies; DHS requirements; Outlook systems and procedures; and practice guidelines (once developed) ▪ Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment of new environments, including identification of controls to mitigate the risk; and periodically re-assess the risk and controls to ensure they are still effective ▪ Advise your supervisor of potential and real risks, including minor risks ▪ Seek regular peer support and supervision ▪ Share information and worker tips to minimise risks and maximise client and worker wellbeing ▪ Utilise team meetings to debrief, brainstorm solutions to problems, develop concepts, communicate training needs, and improve the service model
▪ Administration	▪ Maintain accurate case notes of client progress and records of expenditure ▪ Balance client and administrative time effectively, enabling case noting to occur within 72 hours of client contact; with no more than 24 hours to lapse in case noting details of critical incidents ▪ Facilitate a partnership approach with key people in the development of Service Delivery Plans and Support Plans, and facilitate client choice regarding ISP funds expenditure ▪ Ensure relevant documentation, both Outlook and DHS, is completed as required and filed/lodged accordingly	▪ Where Outlook holds the ISP funds, payments are to be made at the direction of the person in accordance with their funding plan ▪ The worker is responsible for the quality of supports provided or purchased ▪ Records must be kept of the person's expenditure ▪ Outlook must manage the budget, track expenditure at an individual level, keep records, reconcile and acquit funds, and report to DHS ▪ When in doubt, in the first instance check with management and refer to Outlook policies, and DHS policy and practice guidelines.

Support Worker Job Profile – Key Areas	Community-based Role Requirements	Transition Tips
▪ Networking and Promotion	▪ Foster collaboration, coordination and integration ▪ Establish linkages with government, NGOs, business, community, carer groups, advocacy services, disability networks to build networks – connect clients and connect Outlook ▪ Develop and consolidate partnerships with above to build sustainable pathways ▪ Actively advocate and promote the rights and capacity of people with disabilities as contributing and valued citizens ▪ Encourage clients to self-advocate and work in partnership towards changing community perceptions	▪ Open lines of communication, especially with clients and carers ▪ Network with key stakeholders, including community ▪ Practice methods of managing time more effectively – new ways of working more efficiently ▪ Raising community awareness is a vital component of the Support Worker's role – get out into the community and network, establish relationships and seek opportunities to enhance access and pathways
▪ Work Relationships	▪ Recognise the importance as a sole worker, of seeking peer support from the team, and tap into peer knowledge and skills ▪ Build capacity of volunteers to support clients' achievement of Support Plans ▪ Collaborate with the team and clients to improve the service model and create multiple community pathways	▪ Champion a peer mentoring system – run by workers for workers ▪ Utilise meetings with management as an opportunity to look forward (shared vision) and build a cohesive partnership of reciprocal sharing ▪ Undertake joint problem solving ▪ Collaborate on community awareness activities – joining up with other providers' and/or community events ▪ Utilise the skills and knowledge of managers and colleagues to deal with crises.
▪ Attitudes & Conduct	▪ Adhere to duty of care and code of conduct requirements of both Outlook and DHS ▪ Enable clients to be more empowered in decision making and actions ▪ Facilitate a client self-directed approach ▪ Work from a strengths-based philosophy ▪ Recognise the untapped potential and rights of clients to take mitigated risks ▪ Always seek to progress a client's potential with the ultimate goal of achieving the highest level of independence and citizenship	▪ Reflect the mission, vision and values of Outlook in all aspects of communication – recognising and promoting the enormous potential of people with disabilities ▪ Seek out peer role models with good attitudes and conduct ▪ Acknowledge and support the uniqueness of each individual ▪ Stand back and allow clients to progressively do more for themselves to build independence ▪ Focus on all that clients can do, rather than what they cannot do, and recognise that capacity changes over time.

Further Information

Department of Human Services Disability Services Division 1300 650 172 http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/ Community Building Contact: Chris Allen Email: chris.allen@dhs.vic.gov.au Telephone: 9767 8727	Office of the Public Advocate 1300 309 337 http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/	Disability Services Commissioner 1800 677 342 www.odsc.vic.gov.au
Disability Advocacy and Information Service 1300 886 388 http://www.disability-advocacy.com.au/	Disability Discrimination Law Advocacy Service 9654 8644 www.communitylaw.org.au	Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission Victoria 1800 134 142 www.eoc.vic.gov.au
Office of the Senior Practitioner 03 9096 8427 http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/about_the_division/office_of_the_senior_practitioner	State Trustees (financial assistance) 9667 6444 www.statetrustees.com.au	Intellectual Disability Review Panel 8601 5221 1800 641 038 www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability
Action on Disability Within Ethnic Communities (ADEC) 9480 1666 www.adec.org.au	VALID Victorian Advocacy League for individuals with Disability 9416 4003 www.valid.org.au	Brain Injury Matters (main target group is people with head injury) 9639 7222 www.bim.org.au
STAR Victoria (advocacy) 9650 2730 www.starvictoria.org.au	Victoria Disability Resource Centre 9481 6646 (Tue-Fri) www.drcvictoria.com	Carer Emergency Respite (Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre) 1800 059 059
Local Council Community Access Directory Shire of Cardinia City of Casey	Able Australia, formerly the Deaf-Blind Association (recreation programs and advice on integration into existing groups and activities) 9882 7055 www.ableaustralia.org.au	Carers Victoria 1800 242 636 www.survivingthemaze.org.au
Arts Access Victoria (arts programs to people with a disability) 9699 8299 www.artsaccess.com.au	Noahs Ark (camps for ages 6-20) 9509 4100 www.noahsarkinc.org.au	Impact Leisure Service (camps, activities and respite for people aged 18-65 years) 9568 6144 www.impact.vic.edu.au

Interchange Southern Youth Group – Moira (youth groups for adolescents in SMR) 8552 2222 www.moira.org.au	People Outdoors (Assists people with a disability to access mainstream camps) 9430 2950 www.peopleoutdoors.org.au	Recreational Access Project (RAP) (Recreation and leisure City of Casey) 9705 5200 www.casey.vic.gov.au
No Bend Group (Dandenong gardening group for people with disabilities) 8792 2200	Special Olympics (Dandenong based competitive sports) 1300 654 070 www.specialolympics.com.au	Riding for the Disabled (Horse riding for people of all ages who have a disability) 9486 5755 www.rda.org.au
Sailability Australia (sailing for people who have disabilities) 95970066 www.sailability.org/au/australia	Tennis for people with a Disability – Tennis Australia 8420 8420 www.tennis.com.au	Vic Wheelchair Sports Association (range of sports for people in wheelchairs) 9473 0133 www.vewsa.com.au
Tourmates (holidays for adults who have a disability and require one to one support) 9431 2732	Vic.Netball -Disability Service (integrated and disability specific netball teams) 9321 2222 www.netballvic.com.au	Multi purpose taxi program 9320 4300 or 131 171

Resources – Legislative, Policy and Practice

A Fairer Victoria 2005
Victorian State Disability Plan 2002 – 2012
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2007
Disability Act 2006
Disability Services Access Policy 2007
Disability Services Planning Policy 2007
Access to ongoing Disability Support DSR Registration Guidelines March 2007Information and Policy Manual
Access to Ongoing Disability Support Resource Coordination and Allocation Guidelines March 2007
Disability Services Act 2006 Policy and Information Manual 2007
Disability Act 2006 Restrictive Intervention Guide 2007
Undue Financial Hardship Guidelines December 2006
Better services, better outcomes, stronger communities - The Quality Framework for Disability Services in Victoria August 2007
Standards for Disability Services in Victoria 2007
Disability Services Policy Statement Registration of Disability Service Providers 2007
Existing Futures for Young Adults Participants Guidelines (Years 1 – 8) 2005
New Directions for Futures for Young Adults Guidelines March 2005.