

Department of Human Services, Victoria

New standards to reduce red tape and ensure quality services, starts July 1, 2012

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22 May 2012

New Department of Human Services Standards and Independent Reviews will reduce red tape and help ensure community service organisations deliver quality services that provide the right support.

The new standards come into operation on 1 July 2012 and set expectations about how services must be delivered.

- The **empowerment standard** is about helping people to exercise their rights and responsibilities to ensure that people are valued, respected and treated fairly.
- The **access and engagement standard** is about an accessible point of contact and timely, responsive services for people in need.
- The **wellbeing standard** is about maintaining and enhancing people's safety and wellbeing through effective case planning and management.
- The **participation standard** is about choice and decision making in order to enhance people's capacity to participate in society.

The **Department of Human Services Standards evidence guide** provides useful tips for community service organisations about how to meet the Department of Human Services Standards.

In most cases, community service organisations will need to undertake an independent review in relation to compliance with the Department of Human Services Standards. The independent review will also include an assessment of the organisation's compliance with governance and management standards.

Service activities that require an independent review for the first time will need to undertake a review during the 2012–2015 service agreement. The scheduling of independent reviews must be timed with the requirements of

registration under the **Children, Youth and Families Act 2005** and **Disability Act 2006**.

A range of review bodies will be announced soon and information sessions will be held across Victoria to provide community service organisations with information about review bodies and the department's approach.

The [standards, evidence guide, fact sheets](#) and more information about which services and service activities require independent review are available on this site.

Go to [In Focus issue 12](#) main page.

LISA Comment: We question the new standards will complement the NDS 'Victorian Disability Services Transition Plan' – The Report – Executive Summary:

The central recommendation of this report is for a major capability uplift **of the entire Victorian disability system**, in order to better position the service system to realise three objectives that are thought to encapsulate NDIS readiness:

1. People with disabilities, their caring families and supporters at the centre of service delivery.
2. Achieving a sustainable, integrated and equally regulated disability service system.
3. High performing organisations achieving real outcomes for people with disability.

We ask how these three objectives directly benefit the 'consumer' ("people with disabilities, their caring families and supporters"), in real, every day, terms - for example:

- 1 Does 'centre of service system' mean similar to restaurant customers, without whom the business would not exist? As this is not the case with the present captive market service provision.
- 2 Does this mean a consistent, reduced silos and equally regulated between CSO and DHS services?
- 3 What is 'high performance' and 'real outcomes' per se, and in comparison with present CSO and DHS services?

In summary: We do not see these objectives being achieved for all 'consumers' - CSO and DHS. Given the DHS traditional public service captive market structure has, in practice, management and staff at the centre of service provision, inconsistent and revolving door services and little service quality accountability."

It is standards practice for service providers, especially the direct service provision of DHS, Victoria, to produce far more words, than actions. The DHS produce and regularly review their care policies, standards and values, but little changes with the implementation of these at service points. DHS services remain: ‘Lots of care policies, standards and values – little meaningful implementation!’

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NOTE: We are always interested in feedback and information; general, specific, good or bad.

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