

Working with participants and families to transfer Victoria's disability accommodation and respite services to non-government providers

Victoria has always been a leader in providing high quality disability services, and we are committed to ensuring that you continue to receive the best support possible as we deliver on the promise of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Victoria.

This fact sheet explains how the Government will work collaboratively with you and your family, as well as the workforce and providers, to transfer accommodation and respite services in a way that protects the quality and safety of services and ensures you have greater choice and control.

We are confident our strong disability sector will deliver high quality and safe services.

In 2017 the Government undertook an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to test the interest and capacity of non-government providers to take on disability services.

Following a comprehensive evaluation during the EOI, we are confident that non-government providers can meet our strict conditions, including the ability to deliver high quality and safe accommodation and respite services, and to develop and manage a skilled and committed workforce employed on fair terms.

The response to the EOI was very positive and demonstrated that non-government providers share our commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for people with disability, families and the workforce. Amongst other things, these providers:

- have an **exceptional knowledge** of the NDIS, and are already delivering disability services that are tailored to individual needs,
- have **safeguards** in place to protect people with disability and their families, including embedded processes to foster a culture of abuse prevention, empowering individuals to understand and assert their rights, monitoring and reporting incidents and fostering continuous improvement.
- are committed to a **positive workplace** and the continual development of their staff, and demonstrated a strong appreciation of the essential role of a professional and competent workforce in delivering high quality services.
- are delivering **innovative, high quality and individually centred services** which encourage and support client choice and control.

The next stage in the transfer of accommodation and respite services.

The Government is proceeding with a tender process for accommodation and respite services, which opened on 14 February 2018.

Providers have been shortlisted from the EOI stage, and will be further evaluated on their ability to deliver high quality services that are individually centred, individualised and safe, and are delivered by skilled and committed staff employed on fair terms.

Our evaluation criteria has been shaped by engagement with people with disability, families and workers.

The tender process is open until late April 2018. We will evaluate proposals and keep you updated as this process progresses.

We will then start getting ready to transfer these services and staff to successful non-government providers from 1 January 2019. There will be no changes during 2018.

We understand that transferring to new providers is a significant change and are committed to ensuring the transfer is well planned and that you and your family receive accessible information and the best support possible.

We are holding a series of forums through February and March to ensure participants and families are informed about the tender process, can share their experiences and have the opportunity to ask questions.

There will also be more forums later this year for you and your family to actively participate in planning for the transfer and meet new providers.

The Government is engaging organisations to provide specialist advocacy support during this process.

You can visit the Victorian Government's NDIS website to find out more about the EOI and tender processes.

There are certain conditions that must be adhered to.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that you continue to receive the best support possible. Maintaining quality services and continuity of support is a fundamental condition of the transfer. Some of the protections which have been put in place include:

All participants will continue to receive services.

Successful providers will be obligated to ensure that you continue to receive your current services, if that's what you want.

Your home will be protected.

The ownership of group homes and respite facilities will not change as part of this tender process and you will not be asked to move. Under the NDIS, you will be supported to choose the accommodation or respite services that work best for you into the future.

Participants and families can continue to enjoy the relationships they have with the staff they know and trust.

We respect the relationship between you and your support worker, and this relationship is essential to providing high quality support.

Government has invested in the workforce in order to ensure that you can continue to be supported by the staff you know, in your home or respite service.

This includes House Supervisors, who often have extensive knowledge about the people they support. Your future provider will be required to maintain your House Supervisor to provide leadership and peace of mind.

Your transport arrangements will not change.

Access to transport associated with your accommodation or respite service will be protected because we know it is an important way for you to connect with your community. Your provider will need to ensure there is no reduction in current transport services for participants.

Access to advocacy must be provided.

We know access to advocacy is essential to ensure you can raise issues and complaints and have the confidence to speak up. For the NDIS to deliver greater choice and control, we need to make sure you are supported to assert your rights.

Therefore, your provider must ensure that you are supported to access advocacy services, by having the appropriate policies, programs and procedures in place.

In addition, the Victorian Government has invested \$1.5 million into the Disability Advocacy Innovation Fund. This will support organisations funded under the Victorian Disability Advocacy Program to deliver 21 initiatives to better support Victorians with a disability.

We will ensure the delivery of high quality and safe services.

Through the transfer and beyond, we will work in partnership with non-government providers to ensure strong and enduring safeguarding arrangements for quality and safety are put in place.

Under the NDIS there will be a national approach to quality and safeguards. However, the Victorian Government will also establish a monitoring and performance regime for the transferred services and will continue to play an active role in quality assurance.

Successful providers will be contractually required to meet our strict quality and safety conditions, which are based on safety, service quality, and fair workforce conditions.

Successful providers will also be required to put in place regular feedback processes with your family and the workforce. These will be designed with you, and we will monitor the information collected.

We will invest in a quality disability workforce, now and into the future.

As Victoria rolls out the NDIS, attracting and retaining workers with the right skills, values and attitudes is crucial to delivering safe and high quality disability services.

To support this, \$26 million is being invested as part of Keeping our sector strong: Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS.

The plan will give disability workers new skills, greater diversity in job roles, and the opportunity to do exciting and valued work that makes a real difference to the lives of people with disability.

In addition, making sure our disability workers are appropriately registered and qualified is an important step in delivering high quality and safe disability services to Victorians.

In 2018, the Victorian Government will establish an independent, legislated Victorian registration and accreditation scheme for the state's disability workforce, which is designed to protect vulnerable people from harm, and support the development and growth of a quality disability workforce.

Our commitment to collaboration will continue

Since 2016, the Victorian Government has engaged with people with disability, families and disability workers across the state to understand participants' experiences and expectations about the delivery of disability services.

This ongoing engagement goes beyond talking and listening. We see it as co-design, a form of community partnership where we work together to shape the way disability services are designed and delivered in the future.

You can see how findings have already directly shaped the conditions of transfer and the tender evaluation criteria on the Victorian Government's NDIS website.

The Government will continue to work in partnership so that we can plan for the transfer together, and support people with disability, their families and the workforce.

Timelines at a glance

February to April 2018: Shortlisted providers are invited to submit detailed tender proposals.

February to March 2018: Forums for participants and families to give an overview of the transfer process

March to June 2018: Activities to engage participants and families in co-designing the transfer to non-government providers.

Mid 2018: Successful providers are announced.

Mid to late 2018: Forums for participants, families and staff to meet with new providers and prepare for transfer.

From 1 January 2019: Service transfer to new providers, overseen by the Government's strict performance and monitoring regime

Want to learn more?

Visit www.vic.aov.au/ndis to find out more about:

- The transfer process for accommodation and respite services
- Initiatives for the workforce as part of Keeping our sector strong: Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS
- Other Victorian Government disability (reforms to help NDIS transition
- The outcomes of co-design so far
- The rollout of the NDIS in Victoria

NOTE: The transfer of services is about you receiving your current accommodation or respite services from a new provider rather than from Government. This is separate to your transition to the NDIS. The NDIS is being introduced by region in Victoria and