

A Support Worker Training Strategy for the Future



Support Worker Training project

- Project a result of recommendations from the DSC Sector Health Check Committee which noted;
 - “effective training and development for support workers is essential to ensure the quality of support for people with disabilities”.
- Project co-ordinator appointed September 2008.
- The three main areas of focus are;
 - Assist in educating the sector on the available training opportunities;
 - Provide feedback to training authorities on the needs of the sector; and
 - Provide advice to DSC on priority needs for specialist training that cannot be delivered/funded via the community based system.

Identify the training needs of the sector, as well as identifying issues/barriers

- Through consultations such as forums, informal networking and meetings;
 - Identify current barriers to achieving training outcomes, especially for small and regional service providers.
 - Identify opportunities to overcome barriers.
 - Identify current training issues.

Duration of the project

- DSC have funded the project for three years, however the project will be reviewed on an annual basis.

What has happened so far?

- Reference group for project created and first meeting held on 13 October. There are 4 service providers on the reference group;
 - Rob Holmes (SW Family Support Services)
 - Leanne Parsons (My Place Foundation)
 - Charlotte Howell (Hills Community Support Services)
 - Shane Mauger (id entity wa)
- Project co-ordinator is gathering feedback from service providers;
 - Barriers to effective support worker training
 - An analysis of support worker job descriptions
 - An analysis of induction/orientation programs delivered by service providers.
- Training providers in the sector are being kept informed of service provider feedback.
- Ideas WA website is being updated to become the major communication tool for the project.

Nationally Recognised Training options available for Disability Service providers

- Nationally accredited qualifications from the Community Services Training Package 02 version:
 - Certificate II in Community Services Work
 - Certificate III in Disability Work
 - Certificate IV in Disability Work
 - Diploma of Disability Work
- New version of Community Services Training Package. (next year 09)
 - Certificate II in Community Services
 - Certificate III in Disability
 - Certificate IV in Disability
 - Diploma of Disability

Training providers of Nationally Recognised Training

- Various TAFEWA colleges in the metropolitan and regional areas
 - West Coast
 - Central
 - Challenger
 - Most of the regional TAFE colleges
- Private training organisations
 - Carealot
 - TR7
 - RTO Assist
- Enterprise Training Organisations
 - DSC
 - Rocky Bay
 - Association for the Blind
- All of this training is competency based and may only be assessed by Registered training organisations.

Accredited non Nationally recognised training

- The best example of this is Silver Chain
 - Silver Chain is a Registered Training Organisation
 - All training is competency based
 - All training is assessed
- Whilst not nationally recognised training, staff who have been “accredited” by Silver Chain to carry out certain special procedures, may use this as part of an application for Recognition of prior learning.

Non accredited training options available

- There are a number of training providers listed on the DSC website and the Ideas WA website who provide “non accredited training” in a range of disability related training programs and packages including;
 - Pre-employment package for support workers
 - Disability awareness
 - Behaviour Management
 - Duty of Care
 - Values
 - Autism
 - Makaton
- Whilst this training may be used by participants as part of an application for the Recognition of prior learning the training alone is not recognised as equivalent to nationally accredited training, because participants are not necessarily assessed.

Skills Sets from qualifications

- A recent development in Vocational Education and Training has been the concept of “Skills Sets”
- This involves the identification of a number of units of competence from a whole national qualification that are required for a specific job role.
- Someone who completes a skills set satisfactorily can receive a “statement” or “certificate” that identifies the specific job role.
- The competencies gained in the skills set are credited if a person wants to gain the full qualification in the future.
- Employers in some industries are identifying skills sets rather than whole qualifications to determine standards for workers within their sector.
- *It is worth noting that nationally, the Certificate III in Disability is considered the minimum qualification for support workers.*

Delivery options (Nationally accredited training)

- ***Pre-employment introductory training.***
 - Some private and public RTOs offer a short accredited training program for people who are not currently working as support workers. (approx. 7 weeks)
- ***Work based training with occasional workshops for new and existing support workers.*** (workshops vary from fortnightly to three monthly)
 - Workers use their workplace as the primary training and assessment environment. They are visited and assessed in the workplace by the RTO, but evidence from immediate supervisor is used when making assessment decisions.
- ***On line or self paced training.*** Workers use work books or on line activities to work through training modules independently at their own pace.
- ***Full time training for a whole qualification (Cert. III) pre-employment.***
 - Until recently this was the predominant delivery option. However currently this option has almost disappeared.

Funding available to employers

- ***Traineeships.***
 - **New workers.** Support workers may be eligible for Commonwealth funding of \$4000 if they are signed up as a trainee within the first 3 months if full time, or the first 12 months if part time. Workers must complete a Certificate III in Disability Work. Within 12 months if F/T and 18 months if P/T.
 - **Existing workers.** Support workers who miss out on eligibility for the above because of time in job, may be eligible for an existing worker traineeship (\$4000). However these trainees must complete a Certificate IV in Disability Work. Within 2 years if F/T and 3 years if P/T.

Critical Skills and Productivity Places Programs

- Both of the above programs enable organisations to provide training for staff who may be ineligible for traineeship incentives, at a reasonable cost.
- The organisation does not receive any funds, but the Training provider receives some funds to deliver the training.

Costs to employers or employees

- There are costs involved when undertaking training;
 - Enrolment fees for nationally recognised training will vary between private and public training organisations. A complete Certificate III enrolment at a TAFE college will cost approx. \$620.00 per trainee. Private RTO's charges vary.
 - Non accredited training costs vary and may be negotiated dependant upon content and number of people attending.
 - There is a cost to employers of “back filling” staff who may need to attend off the job training, as well as paying staff to attend the training.
 - There is a cost in terms of the support that supervisors/co-ordinators provide to their staff in training.
- *Please consider other costs when meeting later this morning.*

Free training

- Some Access Programs are free.
 - These programs offer a few introductory units from an accredited qualification with the option of going on to complete a full qualification through a traineeship.
 - This type of training tends to target people who are not currently employed in the sector.
 - Usually full time training over 6-8 weeks.
 - Example. Carealot Training College (Morley)
- “Skills for support workers”.
 - This non accredited training which uses a “Person Centred Approach” runs for 6-8 days and is designed for people wanting to gain introductory skills to work as a support worker in the sector.
 - Example. Perth Home Care Services.

More free stuff!

- There are several free to use “self paced” training modules that have been developed. Most may be accessed through the Ideas WA website.
 - SMARThinking. This is an excellent training resource for assisting support workers to understand and manage behaviour.
 - Disability Support Worker Learning Guide. Another very good training resource that covers a wide range of relevant topics.
- There are some excellent manuals and videos that are free to use.
 - For example. Community inclusion (contains the Making a difference; “The skys the limit” video) DSC 2002.
 - A set of 6 information sheets covering useful topics for new support workers (MS Society) Available from Ideas WA website.
- The Ideas WA website has a comprehensive list of resources in “Disability Sector Training” An Information Resource for WA Disability Services. www.ideaswa.net

Barriers to effective training already identified.

- Training costs
- Difficulty in releasing staff to attend training/no staff available to backfill
- Staff with poor literacy/English language skills
- Staff un-receptive to training in their own time
- Training providers not delivering the training required
- No clear sector wide agreement on minimum competencies required
- Awareness of what training is available

Issues identified

- Need for refresher training of existing staff
- Managers/co-ordinators need training in how to train new staff
- Difficulty in attracting and retaining staff
- Lack of career structure for support workers
- Support workers should get more credit for their life skills and experience (a better RPL system)
- Support worker's roles different depending upon organisation; What is a support worker?
- We need to use a better name for "support workers" to make it a more valued role.
- The sector may not be making the best use of limited training resources; i.e. same induction program delivered each time a worker moves between organisations.

What is a “Support Worker”?

- Residential aide
- Client Assistant
- Mentor
- Facilitator
- House supervisor
- Personal assistant
- Recreation assistant
- Family care worker
- Support worker
- Carer

To name a few.....