



What you should know about...the DISABILITY STANDARDS

Overview: The Disability Services Standards have been developed to assist the government to define their expectations of service providers who provide services for people with disabilities and their families.

The Western Australian Government adopted 8 standards in 1993; these were developed in consultation with service providers, consumers and other stakeholders.

The standards describe the principles and objectives of the Disability Services Act of 1993, which is legislation, put in place to protect the rights of people with disabilities. Service providers are assessed against the standards to ensure the quality of their services for people with disabilities and to demonstrate accountability.

In 2004 the Disability Services Commission approved the adoption of the ninth standard, “Protection of Human Rights and Freedom from Abuse and Neglect”. The nine standards cover:

- ❖ **Standard 1** Service access
- ❖ **Standard 2** Individual needs
- ❖ **Standard 3** Decision making and choice
- ❖ **Standard 4** Privacy, dignity and confidentiality
- ❖ **Standard 5** Participation and integration
- ❖ **Standard 6** Valued status
- ❖ **Standard 7** Complaints and disputes
- ❖ **Standard 8** Service management; and
- ❖ **Standard 9** Protection of human rights and freedom from abuse and neglect

Key Points:

All Staff Should:

- have an understanding of the 9 disability service standards and how they apply to their workplace and work habits.
- demonstrate behaviours that align with the disability standards when working with people with disabilities and their families.
- know about the standards monitoring process, both external monitoring and self assessment and participate in the process.
- be aware of policies and procedures of their organization and how these are linked with the disability standards.
- have an understanding of how the disability standards assessment process provides a basis for assessing services and making improvements where required; i.e. the quality improvement process.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

1. Why have Disability Standards?
2. How do our clients / consumers find out about the Disability Standards?
3. What are the Disability Standards and how do they apply to me in my workplace.
4. How does the organization go about implementing the standards?
5. What is the standards monitoring process all about, who conducts it and where does the report go?
6. What happens about recommendations from the report?

Responding to FAQs:

1. The Disability Standards have been created to protect the rights of people with disabilities, and their families, and to ensure that the services they receive meet minimum standards. There are many diverse conditions that result in disabilities of a varied nature. The range of disability can vary from that of a child born with profound intellectual and or physical disabilities to someone who has an acquired disability from a late onset disease or accident eg head injury. The standards are there to protect the rights of everyone but in particular those less able to make independent decisions and who are more vulnerable.
2. The Disability Standards are promoted throughout the organization with posters and booklets available for consumers. You can direct people to the Disability Services Commission website for further information. All consumers who participate in the standards monitoring process are given information regarding the standards when consents to participate are sought.
3. All staff should be aware of the standards and how they apply to our services and the way we deliver those services. The organization has policies and procedures that refer to the standards and our organisational processes ensure that we can demonstrate compliance with specific requirements as well by intent. For example: it is a requirement that all new staff have a Federal Police Clearance that is current (i.e. less than 12 months old) before commencing work. Recently Standard 8 was amended to reflect the need to update the Police Clearance every 3 years – the organizations procedures were amended to ensure compliance with this new change and staff has been informed.
4. The organization uses the standards as guiding principles that demonstrate a minimum standard that should be accepted by the consumer and our funding body the Disability Services Commission. The programs that we run, using Disability Services Commission funding, have policy and procedures that outline how they meet the standards for example how consumers go about accessing the respite facility and the entry and exit criteria that we utilise to ensure we can meet the needs of those accessing the program. Organisations are encouraged to identify opportunities to improve their service delivery.
5. Standards monitoring occurs annually, in one form or another. External monitors, funded by the Disability Services Commission, conduct a review of each program every 3 years. The monitor comes in to the organization and conducts interviews with consumers, staff and relevant others as well as auditing our documentation and the individual's records. They look at various aspects of our organization and how we deliver services and measure these against the standards. They are looking for positive and negative aspects of service delivery and can identify sub standard practice, which results in "Required Actions" – must do recommendations within a timeframe and demonstrable as well as "Opportunities for Service Improvement" which are suggestions from the monitor.

The report that is published, and tabled, covers a detailed analysis of the service demographics, how the monitor reviewed the service, their findings and recommendations and feedback regarding commendations, positive comments about the service. This report comes to the organization and is circulated amongst relevant management, staff, consumers and Board Members. The printed report is also circulated through the Disability Services Commission at various levels from contract officers, managers to executive level including the Director General and Chairman of the Board. Copies are kept on file for public access.

In between the external monitoring visits the organization conducts their own self assessment of each program and completes a report which is forwarded to the Disability Services Commission, including recommendations for service improvement identified in the assessment.

6. The recommendations are reviewed and implemented, by the organization, where appropriate within the required timeframe. The process is considered a quality improvement activity and also serves to validate where a good job is being done or highlight where there is room for improvement.

Useful Resources:

1. Your organisation's **Policies and Procedures Manual**.
2. The Disability Services Commission website – www.dsc.wa.gov.au.



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