

Self-Directed Approaches to Funding in Victoria

field is a learning and development organisation with a commitment to furthering social inclusion. *field*'s role is to assist the workforce and service users to better understand and learn about the new Self-Directed Approaches (SDA) model.

field has a long history of using our IT capability to facilitate and connect people for on-going learning and development. We are committed to creating an on-line space for people with disability and the disability workforce to learn about and understand this new model of support. Initially this will consist of a section on our website including:

- ◆ FAQ
- ◆ Ongoing conversations via blogs
- ◆ Links page

We anticipate this will be an evolving resource based around a centralised 'networking and information hub'. You will find a quick link to *field*'s SDA section on our home page

www.field.org.au

What is 'Self-Directed Approaches' (SDA) and how will this work for people who use and deliver disability services?

A number of countries use self directed approaches already and DHS Disability Services Division has developed a model for Victoria. DHS has produced documents to explain this approach, including '*Support Your Way: A self-directed approach for Victorians with a Disability*'. You can go straight to the DHS website to find these or follow the links to those DHS pages in the *field* website SDA section.

Many people have heard about SDA from the current trials (or 'pilots') being conducted in Victoria – you may even know people in these pilots. Essentially this new approach tries to 'ensure that the focus remains on the person, who is at the centre of all activity and decision making'.

There are many terms used in connection to Self-Directed Approaches, including:

Self-directed Planning

You (and your family and support network if requested by you) direct the planning of your disability supports. This plan provides the basis for the way your supports will be provided through a range of informal, community based and disability funded support options.

Self-directed Support

This is the primary means to achieve the self-directed plan. Self-directed support can be a combination of funded and unfunded options.

Self-directed Funding

In this model funding is tied to the person with a disability, is portable and can be used to purchase services from your preferred provider (consistent with agreed purchasing principles and business rules). Resources are allocated based on your needs as identified through your self-directed planning process. In the future this may include direct payments which is the transfer of an agreed amount of funding directly to a person with a disability, a family member, or carer, who is then able to manage the selection and purchase of supports in line with the agreed plan. This is currently being trialed in Victoria.

I want to use this approach (SDA) – what do I need to do?

If you have not had an Individual Support Package* before:

When you make contact with the region for the first time you will be assisted to plan what supports you need. If this planning shows that you need supports funded by Disability Services you will be helped to fill in a request for the Disability Support Register (DSR). Then:

1. When Individual Support Package funding becomes available, the region will tell you what your *notional allocation* is so that you can plan within that amount. Some people take an 'active role' and initiate contact with their DHS regional office about this.
2. The region will discuss with you the options for working out a *support plan and funding proposal*. You can do the planning yourself, have a family member help you or use the services of a *facilitator*. The region will ask if you want to choose a *facilitator organisation* from within the region.
3. When you think your *funding proposal* describes what you need, it is submitted to the region where a *financial delegate* will assess whether it meets the Individual Support Package Funding Guidelines.
4. If there is anything in your proposal that does not meet the Funding Guidelines, the region might send it back and ask you to think of other ways of achieving your goals. You can then re-submit your *funding proposal*.
5. If everything is okay, the *delegate* will approve your *funding proposal* and it will become your new *funding plan*.
6. You will then be able to contact your service providers and start receiving the services outlined in your *funding plan*.

* For more detail see *Individual Support Package Handbook, DHS*.

If you already have an Individual Support Package:

7. Your DHS region may contact you to tell you that your *support plan* is due for a *review*, or you may request a *review* because your needs have changed.
8. You will not need to complete a DSR request (unless your needs have increased a lot), because you are already receiving a package.
9. All the steps shown above in 1. to 6. will be followed. The only exception is that the amount of funding you have to plan with will be the most recent allocation that was approved for you.

To sum up, the self-directed approach is about you having more control and knowledge about how much your funding allocation is, and how to use it more effectively. *field* is keen to support learning about how this will work in practice – in your life. You can participate in this shared learning through the quick link on the field home page www.field.org.au

Ref: *Support Your Way: A self-directed approach for Victorians with a Disability*, DHS Victoria, 2008.

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