



Review of the Draft Service Charter

Prepared for the NSW Government -

Ageing, Disability and Home Care

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Prepared by the Physical Disability Council of NSW

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Who is the Physical Disability Council of NSW?

The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) is the peak body representing people with physical disabilities across New South Wales. This includes people with a range of physical disability issues, from young children and their representatives to aged people, who are from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances and live in metropolitan, rural and regional areas of NSW

The objectives of PDCN are:

- To educate, inform and assist people with physical disabilities in NSW about the range of services, structure and programs available that enable their full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship
- To develop the capacity of people with physical disability in NSW to identify their own goals, and the confidence to develop a pathway to achieving their goals (ie self advocate).
- To educate and inform stakeholders (ie about the needs of people with a physical disability) so they are able to achieve and maintain full participation, equality of opportunity and equality of citizenship.

The Physical Disability Council appreciates the opportunity to consider, and make comment in relation to the Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) Service Charter.

Discussion

The purpose of a service charter is an important document as it provides greater detail outlining the following:

- Minimum service standards and how services are to be provided
- Contacts and sources of additional information
- What you need to know so you can help us to help you
- Enquiries, feedback, compliments, complaints and suggestions.

PDCN is concerned about the footnote included in the Draft ADHC Service Charter indicating that the service charter is not relevant to services provided by non- government organisations. PDCN understands that ADHC is planning on outsourcing all disability services over next few years, and subsequently PDCN would recommend that ADHC reconsiders this provision, and develops a policy where all contracted services receiving ADHC funding need to provide evidence of quality service standards and charter. This concern is reinforced latter in the Service Charter, in the section titled 'Improving our Services' in that it refers readers to documentation about the need for improved service delivery of non- government organisations but fails to include any mention about the service standards of government bodies.

PDCN is aware that requiring services that receive ADHC funding to demonstrate quality service standards, will exclude private and public services available in the general community that are not in receipt of ADHC funding. With the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme PDCN understands that many service users will be accessing community- based supports not necessarily funded by ADHC, and subsequently from services not needing to demonstrate quality service standards. As a precaution PDCN would

recommend that ADHC include a statement within the Service Charter identifying the need to ensure that Ability Link Officers are familiar with community- based complaint bodies, such as:

NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal - <http://www.adt.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice - <http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/agd>

NSW Anti- Discrimination Board - <http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Energy and Water Ombudsman – <http://www.ewon.com.au/>

NSW Fair Trading - <http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/default.html>

NSW Health Care Complaints Commission - <http://www.hccc.nsw.gov.au>

NSW Information and Privacy Commission - <http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW LawAcces - <http://www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/>

NSW Ombudsman - <http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/>

Australian Human Rights Commission - http://humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/index.html

ADHC refers to intent to monitor the delivery of services to ensure quality, but fails to identify timeframes or any other measures that could be used to determine when minimum standards have been met and when these are not met. The following identify minimum standards that could be easily inserted into both the plain English and easy- English versions of the ADHC Service Charter. By including these it would demonstrate a greater commitment and enable consumers to determine when the Service Charter has been breached;

- The percentage of incoming phone calls that are answered within two minutes,
- Wait times for customers with pre- arranged appointments and for customers without appointments
- Number of working days before written correspondence is acknowledged
- Expected times for complaints management

The Draft ADHC Service Charter includes information on contact details for metropolitan, regional and rural NSW, but it fails to identify how information in alternative formats can be accessed.

ADHC needs to be aware that not all consumers necessarily have access to computers or the ability to competently use the internet, and subsequently PDCN recommends that the section on complaints handling also contains a contact number for the ADHC Officer responsible for complaints, with an offer to provide written material in accessible formats. This too is recommended where information is provided on accessing external advice through NSW Ombudsman.

PDCN appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Draft ADHC Service Charter. If you require any further information or clarification, please contact the PDCN Policy Officer; Jordana Goodman at jordana.goodman@pdcnsw.org.au ph. (02) 9552 1802.

