



Physical Disability Council of NSW
Ordinary People Ordinary Lives

Submission for icare Lifetime Care
Review of the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines

Ellen Small

Physical Disability Council of NSW
3/184 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037

02 9552 1606
www.pdcnsw.org.au
ellen.small@pdcnsw.org.au

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.

Our core function is to influence and advocate for the achievement of systemic change to ensure the rights of all people with a physical disability are improved and upheld.

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 (i.e: self-advocate).
- To educate and inform stakeholders (i.e: 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.

Submission

The Physical Disability Council of NSW (PDCN) appreciates the opportunity to provide comment to icare Lifetime Care on the draft Lifetime Care and Support (LTCS) Guidelines 2017 and the accompanying Companions document.

PDCN would like to provide brief feedback on the revisions that have been made to the LTCS Guidelines as we feel that much of what needed to be addressed has been dealt with in earlier feedback given by the LTCS advisory committee members to date, however we believe the changes have been valuable and have made the document clearer and easier to understand.

Changes in formatting, including removing nonessential information that is available elsewhere (such as the exclusion of the privacy and confidentiality section in Part 5) has made the revised guidelines concise and has increased the readability of the document. Other formatting changes including the revised numbering throughout and the addition of sub headings, such as 'criteria for brain injury' and 'criteria for spinal injury' in the eligibility section, are a significant improvement, organising the information in a clearer manner.

Furthermore, PDCN feels the revised guidelines better integrate background information and definitions within each point; for example, in Part 16 with the explanation of vocational rehabilitation services. This provides a smoother flow of information and simplicity for the reader.

The incorporation of a text box to identify and highlight relevant sections of legislation, e.g. Motor Accidents (Lifetime Care and Support) Act 2006, as seen in Part 2: Guidelines for disputes about eligibility, is convenient and appropriate. Providing clear information to participants, and easy access to this information is essential in promoting the true involvement of participants in the process and ensuring participants understand the basis for how eligibility decisions will be made by icare. PDCN believes the inclusion of timelines for when a determination will be made on an eligibility decision is also beneficial as this will provide certainty for participants who may be experiencing a turbulent period in their life following an injury. The addition of the plain English Companions document has ensured the presentation of this information is straightforward.

PDCN commends the icare LTCS scheme on the adoption of a person-centred approach and are pleased to see this represented throughout the revised guidelines, which show a greater emphasis on participant choice and control. PDCN fully supports the incorporation of ideas that will ensure the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines reflect and promote an empowered view of people with disability as spearheaded by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The greater emphasis on person-centred service delivery in the LTCS participant planning processes are evident in the new style found in the Guidelines. 'My Plan' provides greater opportunities for participants to be involved in the decision-making process for how their care and treatment needs are delivered. In addition, inclusive actions, such as requiring insurers to send copies of applications made on an injured persons behalf to the injured person at the same time, keep individuals at the centre of their care and treatment.

Overall, we feel the revisions made to the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines have made the Guidelines easier to access by participants and members of the community. This is particularly due to the inclusion of the Companions guide which have been vital in making the information accessible. The Companions are invaluable in ensuring the participants' understanding, as the plain English format provides clarity to the guidelines.

Coupled with icare's additional services such as the ability to link with independent advocacy support for assistance with disputes or eligibility claims, and the soon to be established 'visitor' program, LTCS participants are well catered for within the scheme.