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| Disability action plans in Victorian health services |
| Frequently asked questions |

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# What should your disability action plan include?

All health services are expected to deliver high-quality care that is accessible, welcoming, safe and effective to Victorians with disability, wherever they are treated. Care for people with disability must be holistic, and not narrowly focused on their disability. Health services are encouraged to develop disability action plans to improve the quality of care and employment opportunities for people with disability.

The disability action plan should include actions that:

* address the four outcome areas of section 38 of the Victorian **Disability Act 2006**:
	+ - reducing barriers to persons with disability accessing goods, services and facilities
		- reducing barriers to persons with disability obtaining and maintaining employment
		- promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with disability
		- achieving tangible shifts in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with disability.
* improve holistic care, facilitate pathways through care, prevent discrimination and abuse of health consumers with disability
* are specific, measurable and timely to increase access and inclusion for people with disability
* have an owner or responsible area identified and allocated.

The disability action plan should also:

* explain how you engaged and consulted with people with disability including staff, consumers and community members in developing the plan
* explain how progress against actions will be measured and how the disability action plan will be evaluated.

# Resources to assist you in developing your disability action plan

The Victorian Healthcare Association (VHA) has developed an e-learning package and resources to assist health services to increase their capacity to improve the quality of care and employment opportunities for people with disability. This will also support health services in developing disability action plans.

To access the resources, visit the VHA website where you will need to [create a new member login](http://vhawire.org/new-user/) <http://vhawire.org/new-user/>. Once logged in visit the resources section. If you experience any issues creating a login contact support@vha.org.au <support@vha.org.au>.

The Office for Disability is updating other disability action plan resources and making them available online. The Office for Disability can review your draft disability action plan however, this should not be seen as a substitute for consulting consumers and staff with disability.

Current guidance on developing disability action plans can be found at the [department’s disability action plan webpage](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/disability-action-plans) <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/disability-action-plans>

To find out more, please contact the Office for Disability on 1300 880 043 or email at ofd@dhhs.vic.gov.au <ofd@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

# Consulting with key stakeholders

Health services should engage and consult with staff with disability and the community to plan, develop, implement and review plans to ensure that the process and the plan reflect the needs of people with disability.

You may wish to seek feedback on the draft plan:

* through your organisation’s disability action plan working group
* by connecting with existing local networks, such as local disability advisory groups and engaging with disability representative organisations
* seeking feedback through your website, social media channels, a survey or hosting a consultation workshop.

# What are the ongoing reporting requirements for a health service in implementing its disability action plan?

Once developed, health services are advised to report on disability action plan outcomes through their [Quality account](https://bettersafercare.vic.gov.au/our-work/governance/quality-accounts) <https://bettersafercare.vic.gov.au/our-work/governance/quality-accounts>.

**Public health services** with a disability action plan already in place should report on their achievements for the year in the 2018-19 Quality account report. This should include tangible examples of actions and outcomes focusing on:

* holistic care
* facilitated pathways through care
* preventing discrimination and abuse of patients with disability
* recruitment and retention of people with disability.

Services finalising their draft disability action plan should include details of how the service will engage and consult people with disability, including staff, health consumers and community members.

**Registered community health services** with a disability action plan in place should provide a summary of achievements focusing on reducing barriers, promoting inclusion and changing attitudes and practices.

Services without a formal disability action plan should provide information on how they are improving the quality of care and employment opportunities for people with disability.

# Does a health service need to submit their final plan to the Department of Health and Human Services?

From 2020, health services will be encouraged to lodge their disability action plan with the Victorian disability action plan register on the [State disability plan website](http://www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au/) <http://www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au/>.

The register will provide a list of current disability action plans. This will allow people to keep up-to-date with initiatives being undertaken in other areas.

Please email the Office for Disability at ofd@dhhs.vic.gov.au <ofd@dhhs.vic.gov.au> to lodge your plan.

# Does the disability action plan need to be titled ‘disability action plan’?

‘Disability action plan’ is the most commonly used and recognised term, however, there is no requirement for a plan to be titled ‘disability action plan’. However, it is important that the title of the plan is easily identified and owned by stakeholders.

# Can a health service incorporate disability action plan commitments into an existing diversity or inclusion plan / strategy?

Stand-alone disability action plans are preferred as they can be more effective in raising the profile and importance of disability inclusion within an organisation. A stand-alone plan will also allow for a more comprehensive set of commitments to address the broad range of barriers experienced by people with disability. If your health service has other plans for particular groups such as a Reconciliation Action Plan, the expectation is that your organisation develops a stand-alone disability action plan.

Incorporating disability action plan commitments within a broader community or inclusion plan is acceptable if it meets the following requirements:

* The plan includes specific, measurable and timely actions to increase access and inclusion for people with disability. These should be summarised in a separate section to increase visibility and accountability.
* Actions address key outcome areas regarding: accessing goods, services and facilities, obtaining and maintaining employment, promoting inclusion and participation in the community, shifting attitudes and reducing discrimination.
* Actions improve holistic care, facilitate pathways through care and prevent discrimination and abuse of patients with disability.
* Actions are based on consultation with people with disability including staff, consumers and community members.

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